



## Redesignation And Change Of Command

By Meg Brinkman

On October 1, Fort Myer, which oversees Fort McNair in Southwest, and Henderson Hall, serving the Marine Corp's headquarters battalion, were combined and re-designated Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. This is the first such "joint base" in the U.S. under the Department of Defense (DoD) initiative to realign 26 co-located or close-proximity bases into 12 joint bases to achieve economies of scale and provide common cross-secure standards for installation management.

Garrison commander Col. Laura J. Richardson, Fort Myer's first female leader, became the joint base's first commander, a position she turned over to Col. Carl R. Coffman, USMC, in a ceremony immediately following her appointment. Richardson has since been reassigned to the Senate DoD liaison office.

Coffman is an aviator, as is his predecessor, and has pledged to oversee a world-class operation for everyone. He assured that customer service will continue to support the unit currently serving in Iraq and the soldiers' families at home, adding that on his staff there is no place for mediocrity.

Richardson in her farewell address included a thank-you to advisory commis-



sioner and Southwest resident Ron McBee for his work and support on behalf of the Southwest community. In its history of neighborhood involvement, Fort Myer adopted the Amidon-Bowen Elementary School, provided the

Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps to lead a parade marking the transition of Anthony Bowen Elementary to Amidon-Bowen Elementary, participated in opening day activities at the school (including the 2009 Southwest School Supply Drive), and coordinated

historical tours of Fort McNair, open to the public with photo identification. Additionally, McBee worked with Richardson and Councilmember Tommy Wells to facilitate the signing of the Military Family Community Pact last year.

The joint base's new logo is in the form of a circle, the universal symbol of unity. A purple border symbolizes joint operations rather than a service component. The overlay of a musket and a drum major's baton underneath it represents the security and ceremonial function of the military units serving the greater Washington area. At the bottom are the words "Support and Defend," the installation's motto, and at the top is Wright Flyer, representing the first military aircraft ever operated, flown at Fort Myer in 1906.

## Biography of the New Commander

Col. Carl R. Coffman was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1987 and entered active duty following graduation from Texas A&M Uni-

versity. Upon completion of flight training he was assigned as scout platoon leader, A Company, 4-501st Attack Helicopter Battalion, Republic of Korea. Following the Advanced Course in 1990, he was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas, where he served as squadron adjutant, completed the AH-64A Qualification Course and took command of C Troop, 4th Squadron, 6th Cavalry.

In 1994, he moved to Fort Irwin, Calif., where he served as an attack helicopter company observer controller on Eagle Team, Operations Group A. After departing the National Training Center in 1996, he was assigned to Operations Group C, Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth. After spending 18 months as an aviation trainer, he became a plans officer in the World Class Opposing Forces.

Following graduation from the Army



Carl R. Coffman

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Former First District Metro Police Department building: the site for the new Forensics Lab. A sign out front announces the future construction project and shows a rendering of what the new Lab will look like.

## Prayers for Murder Victims Not Unheeded

By Matthew Bevilacqua

They gathered to pray, and it appears their prayers were answered.

On Tuesday, October 27, the D.C. Contract Appeals Board dismissed a case which had stalled construction of the Consolidated Forensics Lab at 415 Fourth St. SW, two days after Mothers of Unsolved Murders, an advocacy group for families of homicide victims, held a candlelight vigil on the site hoping to expedite the project through song and prayer.

Development for the proposed \$133 million facility, initially intended for completion

in 2012, faced delays this past summer when Mayor Fenty was forced to pull a deal with contractor Whiting-Turner following an appeal by rival company Tompkins Builders, which contended that its plan cost less time and money. Brought fourth three weeks after the city awarded the enterprise to Whiting-Turner, the motion a stifled any progress on the job for nearly five months.

Frustrated by the setbacks and concerned for their neighbors, the several dozen people who flocked to the vigil in front of the former Met-

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## Literary Geniuses at Jefferson Middle School

The eighth-graders at Jefferson Middle School have been busy honing their writing and reporting skills. Under the expert tutelage of Laura Drossner, a 2009 D.C. teaching fellow and member of the Jefferson English department, the young people of our community created a series of essays on a number of topics. The Southwester is proud to reprint a selection of them, with regrets, of course, that we cannot publish every one of these fine pieces. Turn to page 9 to read the selections. The drawing of the historic Jefferson façade is the work of eighth-grader Senghor Robinson.

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## Local Government and Organizations



## ANC 6D UPDATE

By David Sobelsohn, ANC 6D commissioner and secretary

At its October 19 meeting ANC 6D faced an assortment of neighborhood issues and one citywide proposal.

### Marriage Equality

On October 6, at-large Councilmember David Catania introduced Bill 18-482, or the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act of 2009. This proposal would recognize, as binding, same-sex marriage ceremonies taking place in the District of Columbia.

At its October meeting ANC 6D voted unanimously (7-0) to endorse the Catania proposal. Even during audience participation, the ANC heard opposition from only one resident, Carolyn Mitchell of the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly.

ANC 6D Chairman Andy Litsky says that the Rev. Robert Bledsoe, pastor of Riverfront Baptist Church and assistant professor of divinity at Howard University, sent the ANC a strong letter of support urging passage, and that the Rev. Ruth Hamilton, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, attended the meeting and spoke in favor of marriage equality.

I will testify on behalf of the Commission in support of the bill before the Committee on Public Safety and Judiciary on October 26 and will ask that, according to District law, the ANC's opinion be given 'great weight' as the council deliberates.

Earlier this year the D.C. City Council recognized same-sex marriages as binding where the ceremony took place, allowing couples wed in one of the seven states that have recognized same-sex marriage to move here with their statuses intact. But they can't hold their ceremonies here — yet. Catania's bill would eliminate that discrepancy.

### Zoning and Construction

Earlier this year, Paul Broom opened a nautical-themed bed-and-breakfast near the corner of Third and L streets SE. He rents only to people who reserve in advance, forbids alcohol and tobacco, and, under D.C. law can't cook food for his guests. But zoning restrictions limit him to renting only on a month-to-month basis. The ANC voted unanimously to support Broom's application for permission to rent on a daily and

weekly basis.

If completed as planned, the Florida Rock development will see several buildings, serving multiple uses, rise between Nationals Park and

*Continued on Page 10*

### Volunteer Needed

**The Southwester is searching for a volunteer Business Manager to manage ads and income for the newspaper. The duties require a time commitment of about 20 hours per month. Any person who is willing to help out the community in this capacity should contact Glenn Favreau by email at [thesouthwester@yahoo.com](mailto:thesouthwester@yahoo.com).**

## Tommy's Beat

By Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells

### Council Reaffirms Affordable Housing Commitment

Progress continues in the redevelopment of Southwest neighborhoods. Concrete is being poured this week for the eventual reopening of Fourth Street SW, and next week city council is poised to approve affordable housing legislation impacting the Waterfront. The bill reaffirms the city's commitment to creating new affordable housing in the Southwest waterfront redevelopment project, and at the same time, assures that the development team has the flexibility needed to secure financing and keep the project on track.

### Free Flu Vaccination Clinics

With flu season upon us, and amid growing concerns about the H1N1 flu, the city has

set up its initial round of free H1N1 flu vaccination clinics. One has been established in each ward, and residents may attend any one. The Ward 6 location is the Eliot-Hine Middle School, 1830 Constitution Ave NE, accessible by the Stadium-Armory Metro. With a limited supply of the vaccine, the first round of vaccinations is targeted for what the CDC has determined to be the most vulnerable population — pregnant women and young children. As more of the vaccine becomes available, I've asked the Department of Health to ensure additional groups are made eligible and that a vaccination clinic site be established in the Southwest neighborhood to make it more convenient for all. For more information on flu vaccine updates, please feel free to contact my office, or check online at <http://flu.dc.gov>. [check out page 6 for information on all the DOH clinics — Ed.]

## November Community Calendar

**SUN., NOV. 1:** Melinda Dunn Bledsoe, registered dietitian and director of clinical nutrition for Manor Care Arlington, will speak on the topic of geriatric nutrition after worship at Riverside Baptist Church, 11:15 a.m., Seventh Street and Maine Ave.

**WED., NOV. 4:** St. Augustine's Art & Spirit Coffeehouse, 7 p.m. Dr. Beryl Carter Rice, a water color artist, retired social work educator: "Aging is the time when you can become more creative." Coffee and desserts, followed by audience Q & A. St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW 202-554-3222 or [rector@staugustinesdc.org](mailto:rector@staugustinesdc.org).

**WED., NOV. 4:** Alcohol Beverage Control Committee, ANC6D, 7 p.m., King Greenleaf Recreation Center, 201 N St. SW. Contact: Coralie Farlee, Chair, 554-4407, [cfarlee@mindspring.com](mailto:cfarlee@mindspring.com)

**FRI., NOV. 6:** St. Augustine's Game night. 6:30 p.m. Potluck dinner, 7 p.m. Games. Bring a dish and a game to share. St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW. 202-554-3222 or [rector@staugustinesdc.org](mailto:rector@staugustinesdc.org).

**SUN., NOV. 8:** 2 p.m. — 4 p.m., Sunset on Another Planet, an exhibition of an eclectic collection of work from Southwest artist Heather Levy. Westminster Church 400 I St. SW Washington, D.C. 20024 (202) 484-7700

**MON., NOV. 9:** ANC 6D public business meeting, 7 p.m. St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW.

**THU., NOV. 12:** Tommy Wells office hours 8 a.m. — 9 a.m., Channel Inn, 650 Water St.

**SAT., NOV. 14:** The Lifeline Partnership Annual Fundraising and Friend-Raising Dinner and Silent Auction for Lifeline Partnership. Lifeline Partnership is a companion ministry of St. Matthew's and First Trinity Lutheran Churches in support of developmentally disabled adults. 6 p.m. — 9 p.m. The Officers' Club at Fort Meyer, Arlington, Virginia. Tickets: \$70.00 per person. For more information call (202) 628-4819.

**SUN., NOV. 15:** 11:00 a.m. Students from Amidon Bowen Elementary, Jefferson Middle, and Wilson High Schools will

perform at the American Education Sunday Service at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 I St., SW.

**TUES., NOV. 17:** Living Life Book Club, 7 p.m. — 8 p.m., St. Augustine's Episcopal Church's Library, 600 M St. SW. "Led by Faith: Rising from the Ashes of the Rwandan Genocide" by Immaculee Ilibagiza. Facilitated by Dee Burleson and Rosemary Giangiulio. 202-554-3222 or [rector@staugustinesdc.org](mailto:rector@staugustinesdc.org)

**THU., NOV. 19:** PSA 104 Monthly Community Meeting will be held Thursday, November 19, 2009, 7 p.m. — 8:30 p.m. at Potomac Place, 800 Fourth St. SW, Washington, D.C. 20024

**THU., NOV. 19:** NARFE chapter 2052 meeting 12:30 p.m. — 2:30 p.m. This is a change to third week for November only. Southwest Library, 900 Wesley Pl.

**SAT., NOV. 21:** Community Family Life Services, a companion Ministry of St. Matthew's and First Trinity Lutheran Churches for the 2009 "Help the Homeless" Walk-a-Thon, Saturday, November 21. Register at [www.helpthehomelessdc.org](http://www.helpthehomelessdc.org) and select CFLS as your Beneficiary Organization.

**SAT., NOV. 21:** 11:15 a.m. Riverside Baptist Caregiver Support Group meeting, Seventh Street and Maine Avenue.

**SAT., NOV. 21:** Christ United Methodist 9 a.m. — 11 a.m., Men's Group's All-You-Can-Eat Breakfast for \$5.00. Eggs any style, quiche, bacon, sausage, biscuits, potatoes, apples, coffee, tea and juice. Enter the community room off Wesley Place.

**SUN., NOV. 22:** Alternative Gift Fair, St. Matthew's and First Trinity Lutheran Congregations at noon.

**MON., NOV. 23:** SWNA Meeting for a discussion of development in the Southwest/Near Southeast neighborhoods—past, present and future. St. Augustine's Church, 600 M St., SW at 7 p.m.

**TUE., NOV. 24:** The Southwest Chamber Players present the 22 member clarinet choir, Genussa, 7:30 p.m. at St. Augustine's Church, 600 M St. SW. Free of charge, donations will be accepted.

**THU., NOV. 26:** Thanksgiving Day. See Spiritual Calendar on page for local church

services.

**SUN., NOV. 29:** Grounds for Discussion, 10:45 a.m. — 11:45 a.m., St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW Youth Expert Eve Brooks discusses her role as Coordinator of the Near Southeast/Southwest Youth Services Planning Task Force. Form more information, call 202-554-3222 or [rector@staugustinesdc.org](mailto:rector@staugustinesdc.org).

**WED., DEC. 2:** Art & Spirit Coffeehouse, 7 p.m. Author Mary Kay Ricks discusses her book, "Escape on the Pearl, The Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad." St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St., SW. 202-554-3222 or [rector@staugustinesdc.org](mailto:rector@staugustinesdc.org).

**SAT., DEC. 5:** Parade of Lighted Boats, more details in next month's issue.

### WEEKLY, BIWEEKLY

**TUESDAYS, 10 A.M. to 2 p.m.** United States Department of Transportation Farmers Market, 3rd and M Streets, S.E. It runs through November 18th.

**TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS at 5:30 p.m.** at St. Augustine Church the S. Wash. West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative has a course called Quenching The Father Thirst. This course trains men to become responsible fathers/father-figures that love and lead their children to success. Call Alphonso Coles, 202-870-1885.

**THE KIWANIS CLUB** of Southwest Waterfront meets year-round at Christ United Methodist Church, 900 Fourth St. SW, every first and third Monday from 6:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

**TUESDAY AND THURSDAY EVENINGS:** The South Washington West of the River Fatherhood program will start their "Quenching the Father Thirst" sessions at St. Augustine Church, 600 M St. The sessions provide a place for dads to talk, share and learn to improve relations with their wives and children. For more information call Alphonso Coles at 202-870-1885.

**NOV. 1 — Nov. 26:** Christ United Methodist ongoing Thanksgiving food drive of non-perishable food to be distributed through the South Washington/West of the Rive Family Strengthening Collaborative.

## The Southwester

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To contact the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, Inc. please leave a message at 202-554-8560.

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Please submit calendar items for December events to voice mail — 202-554-8560 or by e-mail to [thesouthwester@yahoo.com](mailto:thesouthwester@yahoo.com) by Wednesday, November 18, 2009.





# SWNA Discusses Health Care in the Community

By Peter Atlee

With the health care debate heating up around the nation and Congress finally prepared to vote on its reform proposals, the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) dedicated its October meeting to health care in the District of Columbia.

For the second month in a row, SWNA welcomes its residents' elected officials. Following last month's successful forum of city council members, this month we heard from Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District's Delegate to Congress. Despite her lack of a floor vote, the congresswoman yields tremendous influence on Capitol Hill, where her years of service have even secured her a subcommittee chairmanship.

Norton announced Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's intention to include an "opt-out" public plan in the soon-to-be-introduced Senate reform package. Norton believes that a public option, which could pass both houses, is the best option to increase quality and decrease cost. She also extolled District residents for their civility and understanding at her recent town hall meetings. After discussing the statistic supporting universal coverage (especially including the need to cover more young and healthy individuals that can reduce premiums), the congresswoman presented some specifics from each chambers' plan.

She was also gracious enough to answer several of the community's questions. In response to a question about the rising deficit and the costs of health care reform, Norton discussed



Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton addresses SWNA meeting attendees

Congress's plan to draft a budget neutral plan and explained how a properly structured reform plan could save billions of dollars in the long-run. She also addressed the contention that the public option was government-run "socialism" and she welcomed residents to contact her office should they need help dealing with insurance companies.

Norton's discussion of broad health care reform was followed by presentations about two diseases prevalent in the District of Columbia.

Ron Daniels, program director for START at Westminster Church, discussed the church's efforts to limit the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among at-risk populations. The program offers access to information, resources, referrals and prevention tools. With an infection rate of 3 percent, the District has the nation's worst rate of HIV infection; making matters worse, one in every 10 individuals with HIV do not know they are infected. Daniels emphasized the importance of testing and condom use in preventing the spread of the disease, and he stressed the notion that sexually transmitted diseases do not discriminate based on race or sexual preference.

Finally, Lorraine Nagy, country health specialist at the World Bank, beseeched women in the District to get tested for breast cancer. Like HIV/AIDS the District has the highest mortality rate for breast cancer, which is often preventable and treatable. Oft-cited reasons for neglecting regular screenings are the cost of a mammogram, fear of pain and lack of access to appropriate care. Nevertheless, the District has clinics and programs that can help to mitigate those factors.

Education is by far the best tool for prevention, helping lead to more screenings and healthier lifestyles, both of which can save lives. Nagy mentioned some other prevention measures: early detection through self-examination and regular mammograms, reduced fat in diet, and regular exercise (three times per week). Nagy challenged women to be comfortable with their

bodies and not to be afraid to talk with young women about breast cancer, especially within the African-American community, which is at high-risk for breast cancer mortality.

Join SWNA next month on November 23 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary of St. Augustine's Church for its discussion on development in Southwest.

*Meg Brinkman contributed to this article.*

## SWNA November Meeting to Focus on Neighborhood Development

Join the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly on November 23 at 7 p.m. for a discussion of development in the Southwest/Near Southeast neighborhoods—past, present and future. We will view a presentation called "The Bulldozer and the Rose" and discuss the impacts of development on our community. We also hope to hear a progress report from some of the developers working in our area. In the spirit of the upcoming season, we hope to have something for which to be thankful by the end of the meeting. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary of St. Augustine's Church, 600 M St. SW.

## Highlights from Police Service Area 104 Monthly Meeting

Reported by John McGrath

Police Lt. Nicholas Gallucci reviewed the year-to-date crime statistics which show an overall positive trend (minus 13.7 percent overall; minus 28.3 percent for violent crime and minus 9.3 percent for property crime). However, burglary remains high (46 incidents to date in 2009, a 70.4 percent increase over 2008). A small increase in stolen auto was noted over 2008. Perpetrators of a street robbery and a simple assault involving juvenile offenders on bikes have been identified by the police. Also noted was a very recent fatal shooting in an alley near 1300 First St. SW (assailant killed and intended victim wounded).

Other community concerns discussed include: (1) the issue of privacy surrounding the disposition of juvenile offenders, e.g., three youths who beat a man to death one year ago on Sixth Street SW – some members of the Southwest community would like an update on the status of the juveniles in this case; (2) in response to a question about patterns of crime in near Southwest, Gallucci stated that crime along 4th St. SW in 2008 had been knocked down, but there are variable crime incidents throughout PSA 104. Irv Gamza noted the historical difference in crime, i.e.,

higher crime in public housing areas versus the condo/co-op communities; (3) theft of bikes from lock-ups on Harbour Square property (there is no longer a D.C. registration for bikes, but national online registration through Facebook was mentioned);

(4) incidents of dogs running off leash on or near Harbour Square property (added oversight by the Harbour Square pet committee was mentioned; the police suggested a call to D.C. Animal Control in extreme cases).



**GYNECOLOGIC CANCER FOUNDATION  
RACE TO END WOMEN'S CANCER**

**HALF MARATHON \* 5K \* 1 MILE WALK**

**Sunday, November 8, 2009**  
**7:00 AM-11:30 AM**  
**Running through the streets of  
Southwestern D.C.**

**Conquer a Half Marathon.  
Challenge a 5K or 1 mile.  
Connect with colleagues to  
form a relay team.**

**It doesn't matter how you run...**  
**Every step you take is  
a step to end cancer.**

**To view street closures or to learn more about the race, visit**  
**[www.gcfpace.com](http://www.gcfpace.com)**

In June 2009, a petition of 163 signatures from First District Ward 6 residents was sent to D.C. city officials and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton requesting immediate attention to the chronic flooding of what was known as the 1960's Urban Renewal Project, located between Seventh and Fourth streets and G and I streets. The project consists of four homeowners' associations: Town House Management One, Two, Three and Four and three apartment building complexes: The Commons at Town Square, consisting of approximately 190 single-family town homes and more than 100 apartments. It has been reported that due to inadequate engineering of the storm water drain system, 32 homes have been flooding chronically since 2003. Constant water logging in homes leads to costly repairs and an unhealthy and unsafe living environment affecting the quality of life for city residents.



## Real Estate Notes

By Will Rich

■ On October 14, the U.S. House of Representatives passed bill HR 1700, which will allow the GSA to **negotiate the sale of a parcel at 12th Street & Independence Avenue SW to organizers of the National Women's History Museum.** The vacant parcel can accommodate up to 300,000 square feet of space. Now the bill goes to the Senate for approval. Once Congress allows the sale to occur, the museum will need to raise \$250 - \$300 million in order to build its complex.

■ The **sidewalk along the east side of Fourth Street SW, next to the Phase III building at the Patriots Plaza office complex, has reopened** to pedestrians. The plaza area in front of all three buildings on the 300 block of D Street is almost complete.

■ The planned **MLK memorial near the Tidal Basin has received all necessary approvals** from the National Capital Planning Commission. The National Park Service should issue building permits by early November so construction can begin on the long-awaited memorial to the slain civil rights leader. Construction should be complete in late summer of 2011.

■ DDOT recently made their plans public for a **city-wide streetcar network**, built in three phases, and **two of the planned eight lines will run through Southwest and Near Southeast.** Both of those lines terminate in Buzzard Point, which should help spur development in that section of the Capitol Riverfront BID.

■ **The Ruben Companies has retained the land at 23 I St. SE** after an auction on October 13 produced no bidders. The New York-based real estate developer has other land parcels in the area, including 1100 South Capitol St. SE and 1101 South Capitol St. SW. Originally, JPI planned an apartment building at 23 I St. to finish off their Capitol Yards development, but the property went into foreclosure earlier this year.

■ By early November, the new **Arena Stage under construction at Sixth Street & Maine Avenue SW will be fully enclosed**, allowing interior work to proceed in earnest. Construction of the three-theater complex will be completed by next fall.

■ The D.C. Council has **delayed voting** again on a land lease agreement between the city and E Street Development that would allow construction of a **new Engine 13 firehouse and two office buildings with ground-level retail** at the corners of Fourth & E streets SW and Sixth & E streets SW. The delay is due to the developer not having signed agreements to hire city-certified small businesses or hire District residents.

■ **Government contractor Sayres and Associates has signed a seven-year deal to lease 20,000 square feet at 55 M St. SE,** Monument Realty's office building on top of the Navy Yard Metro station at Half and M streets. Sayres currently is at Maritime Plaza, and is expected to move into 55 M in April of next year. This is the first tenant to announce a move to the new office building, which was completed earlier this year.



Rendering of future MLK Memorial from [www.mlk-memorial.org](http://www.mlk-memorial.org)

■ The **Douglas Wilson Companies** – a San Diego developer specializing in “distressed properties and crisis management” that was appointed in late July as receiver for both 1015 Half St. SE and 100 M St. SE – **is getting construction moving again at 1015 Half** (along with “aggressively” marketing and leasing of the building). Also, a “disposition strategy” for 100 M is expected to be in place soon. The two buildings hit the skids when the original developer Opus East collapsed and liquidated.

■ **GreenHome may take 16,000 square feet of space at the base of Nationals Park** along First Street SE. The nonprofit plans to use the space to promote their GreenSpace concept: a classroom, conference center and vendor showroom for green development. Either the District or the Lerner family may help cover the rent and the space will aim for LEED-Platinum certification.

■ **Justin's Café in the ground floor of Velocity condos at First and L streets SE will open this fall.** The menu will feature fresh salads, sandwiches and wood oven baked pizzas, and there will be a full bar.

*News from Southwest was adapted from the Southwest...The Little Quadrant That Could blog ([www.southwestquadrant.blogspot.com](http://www.southwestquadrant.blogspot.com)) and Near SE news was adapted from the JD Land blog ([www.jdland.com/dc](http://www.jdland.com/dc)).*

## Author Mary Kay Ricks to Discuss Largest Attempted Slave Escape in U.S.

History writer Mary Kay Ricks, author of “Escape on the Pearl—the Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad,” will discuss her book on Wednesday, December 2 at 7 p.m. as the featured artist for the Art and Spirit Coffeehouse at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW.

After earning her Juris doctorate from Antioch Law School, Ricks was admitted to the District of Columbia Bar and worked as an attorney and adviser at the U.S. Department of Labor for over 16 years. In 1997, she began writing about Washington history, and discovered some references to the Southwest waterfront when she was researching for Tour D.C., a since-defunct walking tour company that emphasized original documents, public records and nineteenth century legal cases.

In 1998, The Washington Post published “Escape on the Pearl,” an in-depth feature by Ricks on the largest attempted escape on the Underground Railroad, which took place aboard the schooner Pearl on the Waterfront in 1848. In 2000, WAMU-FM, the NPR-affiliated station operated by American University, featured her in “Life in a Small Southern Town,” a

docudrama on the Pearl saga based on that article. That program was broadcast nationally and continues to be aired during Black History Month. A second article, profiling the Edmonsons, a family with six brothers and sisters on the Pearl, was published in the Washington Post Magazine in 2002.

In 2003, Ricks also wrote a living history performance for the Smithsonian Institution's first nationwide conference on the Underground Railroad called “Passages to Freedom – The Underground Railroad in American History and Legend.” She presented a paper on slavery and the U.S. Congress at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society under the leadership of Professor Paul Finkelman in 2007.

The Art & Spirit Coffeehouse series showcases local artists in their various media as they share how their faith, art and social worldview intersect, says the Rev. Martha Clark, priest-in-charge at St. Augustine's. Donations are accepted to help provide honorariums for the guest artists. Contact [rector@staugustinesdc.org](mailto:rector@staugustinesdc.org), 202-554-3222 or visit [www.staugustinesdc.org](http://www.staugustinesdc.org) for further information.

## Reality Checks

By Essita Duncan

### Saying Yes or No to Medical Treatment

You do have the right to say yes or no to medical treatment, even if you find yourself faced with a terminal medical condition in which your life is prolonged only by artificial means and you are unable to communicate your desires. Yet too many of us, because of poor planning, are waiving the right to speak up about what treatments might be used to sustain our lives. We are leaving this important decision to somebody else who may or may not know our preferences, understand our values or have our best interests at heart.

Take a moment and evaluate your life. Would you really want your spouse, close relative, the court or even your health insurance provider deciding whether to pull the plug? This may be okay for some, but for others who may not have been the most likable people all their lives, there may be forces and powers out there that can't wait to get their hands on that plug. But seriously folks, for obvious reasons that may only be known to you, communicate your wishes in writing.

Your **living will** would speak for you. It would inform your doctors and relatives of your plans regarding termination of life support, acceptance/decline of artificial hydration and nutrition, and administration/decline of pain relief, so your doctors know how to act accordingly. Through **advance medical directives** or a **power of attorney for health care**, you also have the opportunity to name a health care agent to make decisions for you as well as specify your treatment preferences.

I often hear people jokingly remark “just pull the plug.” To them, I say: put your pen where your mouth is – put it in writing. To others who are a little apprehensive about the subject altogether: nobody plans on being faced with an incurable medical condition in which a machine is the only thing keeping them alive. But a decision will have to be made. Why shouldn't you be the one to make that decision, and have it reflect your own desires and values?

### Taking the Stress Out of Foreclosure

Foreclosure is no laughing matter. Every day, homeowners are losing the fight. Foreclosures are coming into our neighborhoods like thieves in the night, robbing people of their homes and reselling them on the block. No homeowner with a mortgage is immune from this villain. A family crisis today or job loss tomorrow could make you its next prey.

Although there are no foreclosure prevention superheroes that will swoop in and totally relieve you of this stress, you don't have to go at it alone. There are legitimate housing counseling agencies and attorneys working tirelessly under Obama's plan and other loan modification programs helping homeowners stay in their homes. Of course we can't forget about our good ole trusty bankruptcy laws waiting in the wings to save the day. You can always count on that to get us back in the fight.

If you still end up on the courthouse steps waving goodbye to your home, you don't have to lose your health in the process. I know that telling you not to stress is like telling somebody facing time in the slammer to take it easy. But frankly speaking, losing even your prized possession isn't worth an early grave. You still have a lot more history to make which isn't dependent on your ability to stay in your current home.

For those homeowners still happily married to your mortgages and not facing a separation anytime soon, it is about time that you get to know your mate. How about finally reading that 100-page document you probably signed at closing without an attorney present? More importantly, if you find yourself in a crisis, don't panic or hide from your spouse. Now wouldn't be the time to exercise your right to remain silent.



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# Undeterred by Late Diagnosis, Cancer Survivor Reaches Out to Others

By Elissa McCrary

When Thelma Jones felt a lump under her arm in September 2006, she didn't have time to give it a lot of thought. She was busy getting ready to travel to Costa Rica to study Spanish. She certainly didn't think the lump could be breast cancer. After all, it was small and under her arm.

Eight months later in an oncologist's office, she would find out that the lump was what she never thought it would be.

"I was just so busy with my life and never thought this small lump would turn out to be breast cancer," remembers Jones, 57, of Southwest. "But it was. I was very surprised."

Jones, who retired from her position as community outreach coordinator at The World Bank in 2005, says she would feel the lump from time to time in Costa Rica, but she put it in the back of her mind. She intended to see a doctor when she returned home, but she soon left on another international voyage – this one to Guyana to take her son on a 25th birthday trip to meet his father's people. For the next several months, she would occasionally feel the lump, thinking she should get to her doctor to have it checked out, but always becoming distracted with another project. Finally in March 2007, she made an appointment with her general practitioner, who gave her the card of another doctor to see if the lump didn't go away.

"I just took the card and put in my purse and really didn't look at it," she says. "A week later, when I was changing purses, I saw the card

and noticed for the first time that the name on the card was that of a surgical oncologist and I thought, 'Why would my doctor give me this unless she thought the lump might be serious?' I called that doctor and made an appointment right away."

It was serious. After tests on what turned out to be several tumors, the oncologist told Jones she had breast cancer.

"It was June 2007 by that point, so it had taken me quite a long time to get in to see a doctor and find out what the lump was," she says. "And the oncologist told me the cancer was of unknown origin, a rare thing that happens to only about 5 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer in this country, and proposed surgery to remove the tumors. I didn't know a lot about the doctor and his experience with this kind of surgery, so I wanted a second opinion."

A second oncologist recommended a different approach. Because there were several tumors, she recommended shrinking them using chemotherapy, then surgically removing them. But after getting a physician recommendation from a friend at The World Bank, Jones sought a third opinion; it turned out to be same as the second. She began chemotherapy on July 5, 2007, which ran through early fall, then had surgery to remove the tumors in November 2007.

While undergoing chemotherapy, her doctor asked her to talk to other breast cancer patients to answer questions and share her story.

"I read about training to be a certified breast health educator offered at Johns Hopkins in

Baltimore, and I remember thinking that I really wanted to do that," she says. "It took me so long to get checked after I found the lump, and I wanted to tell other women not to procrastinate. I wanted a level of confidence to talk to patients that being a certified breast health educator would give me. So I completed the training in January 2008."

She also began a regimen of daily radiation that month for several weeks along with therapy for the lymphedema (swelling) she developed in her right arm following surgery.


"I found that it becomes a full-time job to manage your health when you have cancer," she says.

But even so, Jones finds time to be actively involved in Southwest. She's a community activist who generates a wealth of ideas to help others. Recently, she and her radiologist met with a World Bank official to discuss establishing a regional cancer center in Central Africa, which would enable millions of people to receive better treatment. She also volunteers with the American Cancer Society. She and her team, the Faith Striders, are participating in the Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk in D.C. on Saturday, October 31. Jones has set her sights on becoming a Making Strides Pacesetter, which means she will personally raise at least \$2,000. Her team is registered at [www.stridesdc.org](http://www.stridesdc.org).

"This Making Strides walk isn't just about helping Thelma," she explains. "It's about helping thousands of people who will be affected by breast cancer, including caregivers, families,

extended families and women and men with breast cancer. That's what I want to do, give back and help others by turning a challenge into an opportunity."

*The author is the communications and marketing director for the American Cancer Society's South Atlantic Division in Atlanta, Ga.*



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## Flu Shots

The District Department of Health (DOH) has created a new website ([www.flu.dc.gov](http://www.flu.dc.gov)) to provide information on the recent flu outbreaks and resources the city offers its residents. According to the site, "The H1N1 virus, also referred to as 'swine flu,' is a new influenza virus discovered in the spring of 2009. This virus is spreading from person to person in a way that is similar to the way regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. The District of Columbia Department of Health has been working diligently to reduce the spread of H1N1 among DC residents on the job, at school and at home."

The DOH has recently expanded the priority groups eligible for free flu shots at its clinics. They include pregnant women, youth ages six months to 24 years, adults

with underlying health conditions such as asthma and diabetes, and caregivers of children less than six months old. The clinics will continue to be in every ward once a week for the next three weeks.

The updated list of DOH clinics is as follows:

**Tuesday, November 3 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.**  
Hardy Middle School (Ward 2)  
Wilson Senior High School (Ward 3)

**Thursday, November 5 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.**  
Coolidge Senior High School (Ward 4)  
McKinley Tech Senior High School (Ward 5)

**Saturday, November 7 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.**  
Cardozo Senior High School (Ward 1)  
Ballou Senior High School (Ward 8)  
Eliot-Hine Middle School (Ward 6)  
(1830 Constitution Ave NE – 202-939-5380)  
Kelly Miller Middle School (Ward 7)

**Tuesday, November 10 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.**  
Coolidge Senior High School (Ward 1)  
McKinley Tech Senior High School (Ward 5)

**Thursday, November 12 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.**  
Ballou Senior High School (Ward 8)  
Cardozo Senior High School (Ward 1)

**Saturday, November 14 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.**  
Eliot-Hine Middle School (Ward 6)  
(1830 Constitution Ave NE – 202-939-5380)  
Kelly Miller Middle School (Ward 7)  
Hardy Middle School (Ward 2)  
Wilson Senior High School (Ward 3)



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# Pam Cooking Spray, NutraSweet, Equal and Splenda – EXPOSED! (Kinda, Sorta)

By Derrick Inglut

America leads the way in pioneering the best dietary supplements, gym equipment, training techniques and reduced calorie alternatives. We also lead the way for being the most overweight, so what gives here? We have everything we need right in front of our faces yet we still can't seem to keep our weight under control. What are other countries doing that we're not? Perhaps it's our fault for not trying hard enough. Perhaps we are trying too hard? Or just maybe, it's the fault of companies marketing these devices, gimmicks and supplements to us.

The real problem of our weight woes is that there are far too many loopholes in our system of food labeling. Deep-pocketed manufacturers have all too long capitalized in this issue and we, the consumers, get left out in the cold when it comes to the truth about what they are peddling. One particular example is that current FDA guidelines allow any food product containing less than five calories per serving to be publicized as having zero. This may sound miniscule, but it really adds up.

Let's take Pam cooking spray, for example. Pam claims its product has zero calories per serving when, in fact, it's just as fattening as using Crisco or any other cooking oil. How is this possible? Check the serving size. Many companies manipulate the serving size to portions so small that the calorie count is nearly immeasurable. In Pam's case, the serving size is one-third of one second of a spray, equating about .26 grams. There are nine

tend to use less cooking oil on the pan than those who pour oil into the frying pan.

Next on the hit list are artificial sweeteners Splenda, Sweet N' Low and Equal. Now, I really don't have a grudge against these things; in fact, I admit to being an avid user of them all. However, we all know that the good things in life usually have strings attached, and in this case those strings are calories. All artificial sweeteners have calories. Yes, you heard correctly! Maltodextrin and dextrose (two types of sugar) are commonly used as bulking agents in these products and account for as much as 99 percent of the packets' contents. Only 1-3 percent of the packet actually accounts for the sugar substitute itself. Since these bulking agents are sugars, they have calories – four calories per gram to be exact. Therefore the average packet of artificially sweetener has at least three calories. Again, due to the FDA law that allows rounding, these companies have all rounded the calories of their product to zero. On a positive note, the substitutes are sweeter than sugar gram for gram and users will not need as much of the product as real sugar.



**Product:** Sweet N' Low

**Sweetening Agent:** Saccharin, 36 mg/packet

**Acceptable Daily Intake:** 5 mg/kg/day (8.5 packets for a 150 lb person)

**Health Issues:** May cause migraines in sensitive individuals

**Sweetening Power:** 300X sweeter than sugar



calories in one gram of fat so a serving size of that amount would equal about 2.5 calories. However, FDA guidelines allow for the manufacturer to round its product's calories to zero since the calorie count is less than five.

If we look a little further, we can even see that there are no special ingredients in this product. The first ingredient is canola oil, the second grain alcohol (seven calories per gram), the third soy lecithin (an anti-caking additive) and finally propellant. Nothing more.

Don't think that the olive oil spray is any better, either. Olive oil has just as many calories per gram as any other cooking oil – it's just less saturated and reduces the risk of heart disease and blockage. It WILL, however, get you just as fat as any other oil, as it also has nine calories per gram. The only good thing Pam has to offer is the fact that, due to the application method (spraying), most people

National Institute of Health removed Saccharin from its list of carcinogens and allowed the company to remove warnings on its product Sweet 'N Low. Even Health Canada's Food Directorate has received a food additive submission to re-list saccharin for use in a variety of foods in Canada. However, the word is out and consumers have already made up their minds. Unfortunately, you never get a second chance to make a first impression.



**Product:** Equal, NutraSweet

**Sweetening Agent:** 40 mg/packet

**Acceptable Daily Intake:** 40 mg/kg/day (about 15 cans of diet soda a day for a 150 lb person)

**Health Issues:** May cause migraines in sensitive individuals and phenylketonuria in those who cannot metabolize the amino acid phenylalanine

**Sweetening Power:** 180X sweeter than sugar

Aspartame, marketed as Nutra-Sweet or Equal, was accidentally discovered in 1965 via experimental ulcer treatment. It is a comprised of the two amino acids aspartic acid and phenylalanine bonded by about 10 percent methanol (wood alcohol). While amino acids are certainly good things that you're probably already getting in your diet already, methanol is not.

Methanol has been cited as a possible carcinogen and can convert to formaldehyde, which can cause vision issues. Though the amount of methanol in aspartame is miniscule, it has prompted negative attention to the product. Recent studies have shown aspartame to be a cancer risk and since then there have been numerous counter-studies. In 2006 the FDA produced a finding disproving previous studies and demonstrating the product's safety. The report showed that the initial studies done had "significant shortcomings in the design conduct, reporting and interpretation of this study."

So maybe aspartame is safe after all? We can't be sure. It seems that politics have played a role in keeping it on the shelves. When aspartame was discovered by G.D Searle, and later approved by the FDA as a food additive in 1974, its safety status was revoked upon findings that Searle's own research showed possible cancer risks. Then in 1977, Donald Rumsfeld became the CEO of G.D Searle.

The company was later summoned to court for falsifying lab results and ordered to appear before a grand jury. Rumsfeld, though powerless in government after being ousted in the Nixon era, was still a man of connections. After three years and two attorneys, no grand jury was ever convened and the case was dismissed. The lawyers were later hired to Searle's firm under lucrative contracts to stay quiet.

After Ronald Regan became president, Rumsfeld was appointed as part of his team. The next day the head of the FDA was fired and replaced with a Rumsfeld appointee, Arthur Hull. Searle the reapplied for the approval of aspartame and when the vote deadlocked, Hull added himself to the committee and cast his approval. Finally, in 1983 aspartame received its approval one more time to include itself in a \$1.5 billion industry.



**Product:** Splenda

**Sweetening Agent:** Sucralose

**Acceptable Daily Intake:** 15 mg/kg/day (about 15 cans of diet soda a day for a 150 lb person)

**Health Issues:** May cause migraines in sensitive individuals

**Sweetening Power:** 600X sweeter than sugar

Probably one of the safer sweeteners on the market is Splenda, though we don't really know for sure since its active ingredient hasn't been as extensively researched as saccharin and aspartame. Sucralose, the chemical responsible for its sweetening power has, actually been around since 1976. Even though there are no cancer risks associated with sucralose, it was noted to damage DNA in rats in very high doses. Humans would have to consume 10,000-20,000 packets a day to replicate the amounts given in that study. Hey, anything in that amount will do damage!

Well, there you have it. If you want to believe that these products cause cancer, you can find research that proves it. If you want to believe they are safe, you will find that research too. I personally feel safe taking all of these products. Anything consumed in extreme quantities is a bad thing, but in moderation I easily find my comfort zone.

*Derrick Inglut is a personal trainer who writes on fitness and nutrition. His website is [derrick-inglut.com](http://derrick-inglut.com).*



# Healthy Plants for a Healthy Life

Master gardener Matthew Roberts sat down with us to help educate the community regarding the health benefits of some common plants.

Different parts of plants provide different benefits. For example, some are effective when their leaves or flowers are crushed to obtain essential oils. Others provide their aid in the form of seeds, nuts or even roots.

Probably the best-known houseplant with medicinal properties is the aloe plant. A broken leaf from this easy-to-grow plant exudes a soothing sap which may be used as a quick treatment



Colorful garlic bloom

for burns.

Echinacea, or the common cone flower, is frequently used for treatment of viral infections, allergies and tissue inflammation.

A huge tree, the Ginkgo biloba is often used to promote eye health and proper circulation, as well as control of lipids in the bloodstream. While the female tree bears a rather smelly fruit, the male tree is kind to the nostrils and shows off a canopy of bright yellow leaves in the fall. If planting, look for Autumn Bold or any of the Princeton Series, all purported to be male.

Lowly garlic is good for the cardiovascular system. Plant it now and enjoy wonderful spheres of purple flowers in your garden by June.

While some parts of the plant are poisonous, Digitalis, the Latin name for the beautiful fox-glove flower, is also the source of the medicine by the same name. The pills are made from the roots.

All houseplants by virtue of the process of photosynthesis help clean the air by converting carbon dioxide to oxygen. The number-one oxygen producer is the airplane plant.

It is believed that some houseplants are toxic or poisonous. This is a common myth to some extent. Many plants have some level of toxic-



Airplane or spider plant

ity, but nature has made it so that these plants are very bitter and foul-tasting, and require a large amount be ingested to cause any damage. It would hardly be pleasant for anyone, even a child, to eat enough to feel any effects. And pets can be smarter than us: they will definitely stay away from what tastes poor to them.

Matthew Roberts is a master gardener at Ginkgo Gardens, 911 11<sup>th</sup> St. SE

## Change the Holiday Focus: Get Healthy Now

By The Southwester Staff

“After the holidays. That’s when I will start losing weight and getting in shape.” How many times have you heard this, or even said it yourself? The holidays are the perfect time for health procrastination. After all, these weeks are stressful: family comes to town, there is traveling to do, there are parties and events and lots of dinners. So in the mix of festivities, diet and exercise plans become New Year’s resolutions often meeting with the same lack of success as other annual promises.

However, the cliché “there is no time like the present” is very apt when it comes to our health and wellbeing. Early detection is the watch word for issues of excess weight, and it translates easily into early prevention for many weight-related health issues, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and even respiratory disorders like sleep apnea.

The first order of business should be to schedule that long put-off visit to your physician. Have a check-up and discuss what type of exercise you are healthy enough to do. After that bit of crucial guidance, there are many ways you can take the focus off food and stress from November and through the New Year. This is a perfect way to set yourself up for success instead of failure whether you start your diet plan now or after January 1.

Even before considering healthy cooking habits during the holidays, make an effort to take the focus off food. Eating and drinking has long been associated with celebration, but it does not necessarily have to be this way. Try starting new traditions that are not food-related. Substitute candy and cookie-making with inedible projects like decorating, wreathing or other holiday favors. Use time-honored activities to substitute staying home and snaking: community events and talks, walking tours to view holiday displays and decorated homes or family game sessions. At parties and dinners, focus on friends and good conversation instead of the

quantity of food and drink available.

When attending a party or gathering, take a look at all the food offerings and head to the healthiest options. Try not to make a feast out of a party buffet. Instead, stick to regular meals and eat at home before heading out to celebrations. If you are going to a party event which is intended to host lunch or dinner, try bringing your own healthy dish along with you to add to the food options.

For the sports buffs who spend many days watching others get fit on television, there are many healthier options than the typical football game fair of wings and pizza. Raw or cooked vegetable with light dips, air-popped popcorn and lean grilled chicken strips with hot sauce are some good options. The internet is filled with ideas for healthy game-time options. Just do a search for your favorites and add the words “healthy option” for new ideas.

Another key to success is increasing physical activity. One of the benefits of living in a city is the wealth of accessible public events, especially during the holidays. The Washington Convention Center hosts craft shows from November 6-8, a perfect opportunity to do some walking and enjoy artists’ work. Many other holiday craft shows are schedule in the area. Photo Week begins on November 7, featuring gallery openings, lectures, workshops, contests and book signings. Although the District does not have a Thanksgiving parade, Reston and Silver Springs do. The Gaylord National Resort puts on an ice art display from mid-November to January. There are light displays in public parks, a Norwegian Christmas display and performances at Union Station, and a collaborative museum shop at Strathmore in North Bethesda.

An excellent fitness motivator and goal is signing up for a holiday walk-a-thon for charity. Although helping to deliver food to the homeless is a wonderful charitable effort, it does take time and fills your car with pungent foods. If

Continued on Page 11

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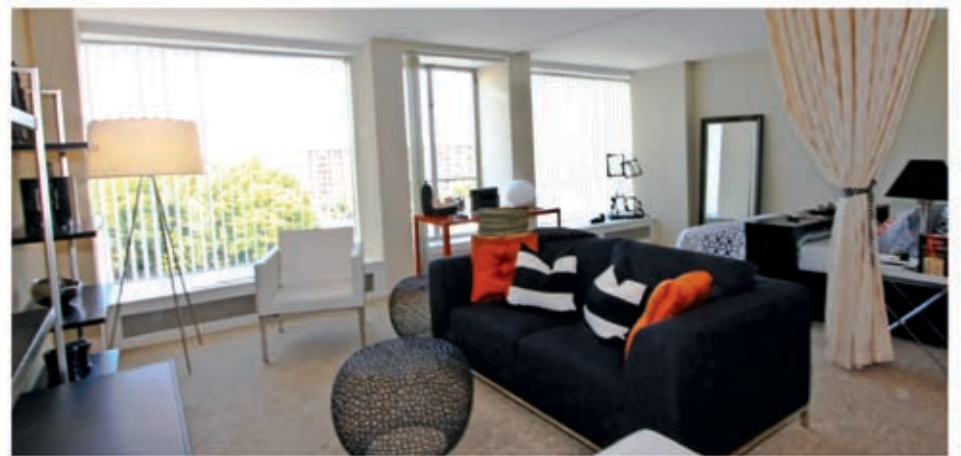
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## St. Augustine's Church and Local Filmmakers Team Up to Help Southwest Youth

By Elaine Graves

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church and filmmaker Michael Mack, host of the church's popular Art & Spirit Coffeehouse, recently joined forces to help at-risk youth in South-

west. Their collaborative brainstorming and proposal resulted in a \$30,000 grant and an arts-based outreach program called JumpStart Media (JSM). The JSM team will use video production as a tool for teaching life skills – reading, writing, teamwork, communication and problem-solving – to a handpicked group of Southwest teens.

The Rev. Martha Clark, priest-in-charge at St. Augustine's, announced, "We are excited that the church has an additional opportunity to expand our creative outreach services to benefit our neighborhood youth." Longtime Southwest residents and parishioners Monica Evans, Kwasi Holman and Irene Sanders are serving as Vestry member liaisons to the program.

Mack explained that the educational basis for the program is the theory of multiple intelligences, conceived by Harvard scholar Dr. How-



Filmmaker Michael Mack.

ard Gardner over a decade ago. The theory, in a nutshell, states that intelligence is measurable. It's the ability to fashion something of value to a community. And there are multiple ways of being intelligent. The I.Q. and other standardized tests might actually tell more about a person's memory or cultural heritage than their intelligence, according to Mack.

The program's goal is holistic growth and development for its participants. But the challenge before Mack and his team of filmmakers, community activists and educators is to find 10-12 young people, all 15-18 years old and deemed at-risk, and engage them in field trips, meaningful dialogue and other learning opportunities concerning the arts and humanities. Then the team must turn the teens into a highly-functional video production crew and fashion a

product – such as a film about their lives – in 10 weeks.

"Mission possible," according to Mack, who has worked with congregations and communities conducting programs like this for years. "This time we have more help and funding than ever before."

St. Augustine's is one of 16 local organizations that recently received a "Coalition Building for Youth Delinquency Prevention and Intervention" award from the partnership between the U.S. Dream Academy, South Washington/West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative and the Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. In addition to \$30,000 of funding for JumpStart Media, the church is providing space, volunteers and scholarships for the participants to continue their arts-based education.

"What I like most about the JSM concept," Mack said, "is that it doesn't just stop at week 10 with a product. We'll do six weeks of follow-up and find ways of helping the kids stay creative."

The local filmmaking community is responding as well. Jim Pollock, Mack's production partner, Jeff Herberger, editor of Mack's film "The Drum Major," and Dana Flor, creator of the HBO documentary "The Nine Lives of Marion Barry," have expressed interest in helping the JSM Project succeed.

Can others get involved? "Absolutely," Mack said. "It takes a village. We're in the process of coordinating with schools, other institutions, churches and other grant recipients. But there's plenty that individuals can do too. People can make donations to St. Augustine's Episcopal Church [600 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20024]. And if they know teens that might benefit from a program like this, they can contact me directly. My e-mail address is michaelgmack@yahoo.com."

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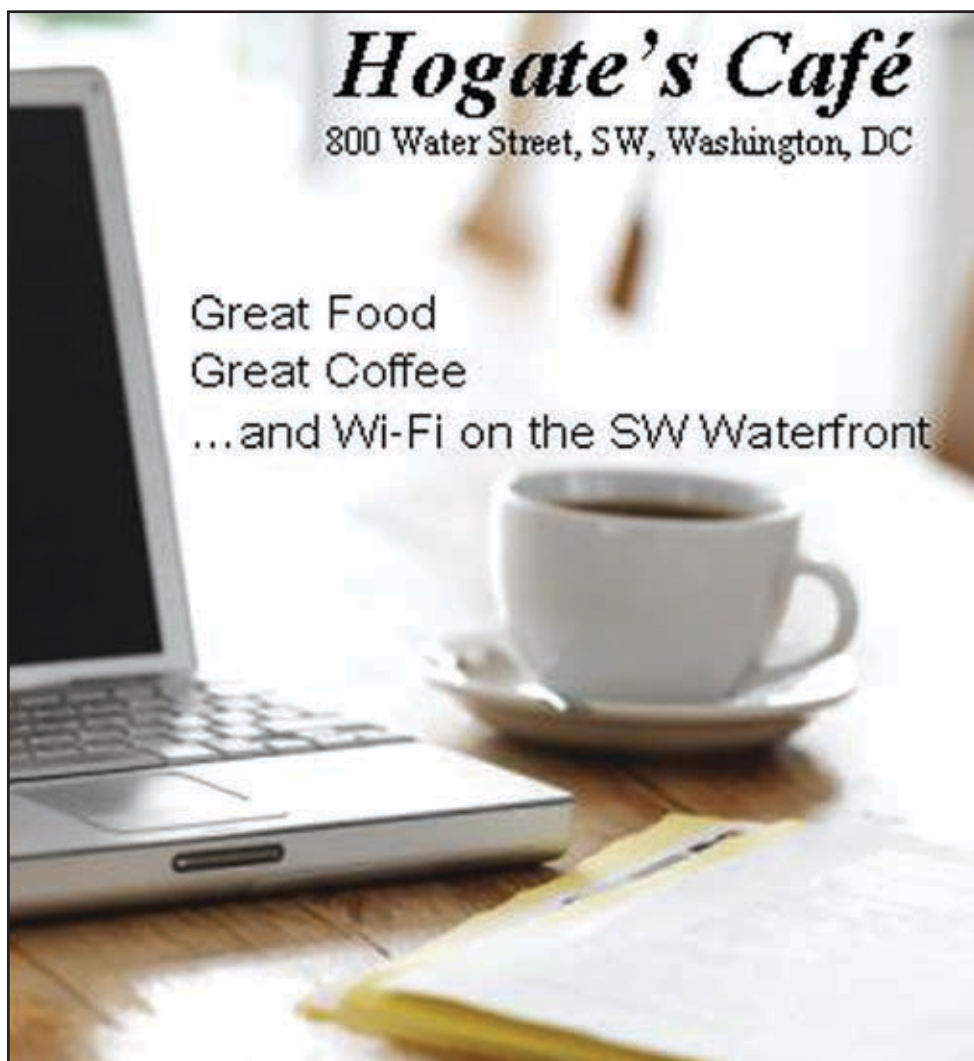
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## Grounds for Discussion: Organizing the Community to Reduce Youth Violence

By Elaine Graves

Ever Brooks, coordinator of the Near Southeast/Southwest Youth Services Planning Task Force working closely with the office of Councilmember Tommy Wells, is the featured speaker at St. Augustine's Grounds for Discussion series on Sunday, November 29 at 10:45 a.m. Light refreshments and an audience Q&A follow the presentation at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW.

The Task Force was instrumental in maintaining services to elementary school students in summer of 2009, and seeks to develop a comprehensive and coordinated system of services and programs to reduce youth violence and improve life opportunities for children in the Near Southeast/Southwest neighborhood.

Brooks founded the Public Charter School Center for Student Support Services and served as executive director from its incorporation in October 1999 to June 2008. Much of its work focused on curbing youth violence, and evaluations show reduction in cases of serious truancy and bullying, as well as improvement in mental

health for students of all ages. The work has also planted the seeds for ongoing reforms reaching thousands of children attending DCPS schools. Today, the school mental health program developed through grants she secured is one of the largest in the country, according to Brooks.

After completing a master's degree at Columbia School of Social Work with a concentration on community organizing, Brooks worked with the welfare rights movement where she led child advocacy organizations in New York state and Washington, D.C. Her efforts resulted in significant expansion of state programs for low-income children and for children's health insurance. Born in New York and raised in Panama, she currently resides in Southwest.

Grounds for Discussion is a community speaker forum offered by the church on the last Sunday of each month from 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. It focuses on local, national and global issues that challenge us both as citizens and people of faith, says the Rev. Martha Clark, priest-in-charge at St. Augustine's. Guest speakers will include writers, educators, and civic and church leaders.

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## Kids and Schools

# Jefferson Middle School Essays

## 1-2-3-4...The Jefferson Football Team's Undefeated Score!

By Jefferson Middle School students Paul Brooks,  
Anton Gross and Cameron Taylor

**T**ROJANS DOWN! READY, SET....HIT! Within three seconds the ball will be in the air. At Jefferson Middle School, the football team not only practices hard but they play even harder. The Jefferson Trojans are the team to beat this year. With a record of 4-0, beating teams from Noyes, Stuart Hobson, Walker Jones and Emery, the Trojans are undefeated.

When the Trojans step on the field we turn heads and make everybody wonder just how tough we really are. Then, when the game starts and we hit the first person, the impact of the hit seals the deal. After that, everyone knows what to expect from us.

If there were three words to describe the Trojans during the game, they would be determined, focused and hardworking. When we are on the field we work hard to stop every play without exception. We are determined to score and we are focused on one thing and one thing only: the win!

This season the Trojan football team set a goal to play our hardest and to win every game including the championship. The unstoppable players to look out for include Anton Gross, Robert Johnson, Charles Kibler and Marquell Washington. But none of this would have been possible without our coaches Ronald Hines, Gregory Knight, Shawn Hart, Mark Collins and Coach Aaron. Our coaches are the heart of our team. They have taught us a very important lesson. School comes first, and sports second. Every player has at least a C+ in all of their classes, which means we can all be deemed student-athletes.

The Jefferson football team has been in the championship for the last three years and has yet to win but this year things are about to change. No doubt, we have the speed, power, agility, sportsmanship and most importantly teamwork to make it happen. The Jefferson Trojans cannot be stopped! 1-2-3...let's make it 4!

## Principals Are People Too

By Jefferson Middle School students  
Jonathan Cassarubias and Trayona Barnes

**O**n September 29, one of the most feared people at Jefferson Middle School, principal Stephanie Patton, was interviewed by Ms Drossner's eighth-grade journalism class. Awaiting her arrival in room 306, Ms. Drossner's 29 students could be found anxiously sharpening their pencils and preparing to take notes. And these weren't just any notes. Notes on the "5 W's" (who, what, where, when and why), indirect quotations, direct quotations, personal observations and even her character traits! Ms. Patton took out enough time in her busy day to talk to students long enough for them to have to get out a second sheet of paper. So here's what we learned:

Ms Patton is only secretive when it comes to her age. Of course, as curious eighth-graders that is one of the first things we wanted to know. But we did find out that Ms Patton was born in Pittsburgh, the home of her favorite football team the Steelers. She was an only child and her favorite subject was social studies growing up. Little did she know that she would one day teach the subject in two different middle schools and one high school.

Years later, the ambitious Ms Patton, who dreamed of being a news reporter, attended Howard University and Ohio State. She received her masters in Administration at Xavier in Ohio, which prepared her well for her role as principal at Jefferson. Ms. Patton states, "I love my job." Ms Patton is proud to be the principal of Jefferson Middle School with its tradition of being a top school in the area.

Ms Patton is hardworking because she is often at school seven days a week making sure everything runs smoothly. Even during our interview she patiently dealt with school issues on her walkie-talkie and the classroom phone.

Ms Patton can be described as a regular person since she loves to sing but can't. She enjoys chips, she's a mom of a thirteen-year-old son, she watches track and football on TV, and even gets homesick from time to time. She even has a most embarrassing moment. During her teacher days she was wearing high heels and fell in a cafeteria full of students only to stand up to find them all laughing at her. Also, when she gets a rare free minute she likes to help out the economy by doing a little shopping (well, maybe a lot).

And to think just how normal someone in power can be. Looking forward to a great school year! Thank you Ms. Patton!

## Big Man Talks about Big Changes

By Jefferson Middle School student Theodora Boone

**I**n September, Antawn Jamison visited Jefferson Middle School to talk about a new program called HP Digital Assist, a joint-effort between Hewlett Packard and NBA Cares. HP representatives, one of whom quoted "Obama has a nice jump shot," accompanied him.

Although many students would rather have seen power forward Jamison in action at a Washington Wizards game, Jefferson was honored just to hear him speak as the 6-foot-9-inch man towered over the podium. Jamison talked about how we should stay in school. He also said don't ever do drugs.

Students in the auditorium kept their eyes peeled on Jamison and listened intently as HP representatives explained to Jefferson, the chosen launch site of the HP Digital Assist 2009 education grant program, the \$80,000 grant for new HP technology that would be awarded to school that best completed a series of five high-tech projects, one of which included explaining the physics of a bouncing basketball. The classroom package includes HP tablet PCs and printers. Jefferson is expected to be one of the top contenders for this prize. The contest began September 14 and ends November 20, so let's bring it, Jefferson!

Jefferson found the joint NBA and Hewlett Packard project to be an inspiring in the midst of the current economic situation of D.C. public schools. Students left the auditorium with Antawn's message that education is the key to success. Even though he was only able to talk briefly, his positive message will stick with us Jefferson eighth graders in our final year before we move on to high school.

On that Tuesday morning, Jamison was not the only one talking a big game. HP Digital Assist helped him play it.

## The Handsome Everyday Hero

By Jefferson Middle School student Janet Lam

**I**'m sorry ladies. I have some bad news...

Officer Milner is married. But it's okay! He still loves his fans! Officer Milner is a 28-year-old married man, who is also a very brave police officer. My class was so lucky to have a chance to interview him for our newspaper on October 6 from 11 p.m. – 12 p.m. in room 306.

He is highly qualified to protect us even though one could be deceived by his handsomeness! When asked what types of training he has been through he said, "I have been maced and tased as a part of training." Ouch!! He has been working as a police officer for seven years, and thank goodness he has never been shot. During his service, he was in a police chase and the most dangerous event that has happened to him was when had to chase down an armed 15-year-old juvenile from running away after trying to steal a car. He also told us about tunnel vision and how he has experienced it. Tunnel vision is where you are so focused on your target that you forget everything and everyone else around you. He responsibly told us that he would never abuse the power of the siren or anything else, because there would be many consequences. However, he did admit the one time he did abuse his power. He ran a red light with his siren on because he had to use the bathroom really badly!

But don't be deceived; Officer Milner is not all work and no play. Born in Washington D.C., he loves to watch the Redskins. His hobbies include eating at his favorite restaurants (Mike's Place and the Cheesecake Factory) and playing basketball.

Milner's childhood dream was to be a homicide detective who solves cold cases and he is still pursuing it. He went to Fordfoot Elementary, Oxenhill Middle School, Suiteland High School and the University of Maryland. His favorite quote, by Malcolm X, is "By any means necessary." To him it means that in order to be successful you have to be willing to do anything. He also has two siblings and four tattoos. He got one of Jesus when he was 21 years old.

In case you haven't had enough....His most quirky detail is that he still has his old basketball card collection and it is at least 4-5 notebooks full. He has had braces for one year and he is a Gemini, since he was born on May 27. So ladies – you know when to give gifts! Officer Milner is a caring, smart, athletic, determined and patient ladies man!

## "A DAY MADE BETTER" at Amidon-Bowen

By Meg Brinkman

**O**n October 6, two teachers' days took decided upward swings.

Jane Parker and Dawn Gray, instructional coaches in math at Amidon-Bowen's technology campus, were each showered with \$1000 in gifts and honored for their exceptional contributions as educators by OfficeMax as part of its effort to honor 10,000 teachers nationwide on one day each October through its nonprofit Adopt-A-Classroom. Each honoree receives a swivel chair and a large box containing essential classroom supplies based

OfficeMax presented members of the Amidon-Bowen faculty with a ball made of rubber bands, a stand-in for the company's logo, adopted from the 4,594-pound creation by Steve Milton which holds the Guinness World Record as the world's largest rubber band ball. The record-setter contains more than 175,000 elastic loops and boasts an 18-foot circumference. As a logo, it is meant to inspire creativity and diligent work.

on research on the things teachers need most. Over the program's ten-year history, 30,000 teachers and their students have been impacted. OfficeMax recognizes the out-of-pocket expenditures teachers make, estimated to be as much as \$4 billion annually, and wishes to help eliminate the "teacher-funded" classroom.

The staff at Amidon-Bowen cleverly occupied Parker and Gray while others decorated the all-purpose room with balloons and banners. The student body filed in and took their places. OfficeMax personnel in colorful tee shirts greeted the two speechless teachers as the children chanted "You are number one! We are number one!" Parker and Gray said later that they were completely surprised because of the elaborate efforts made to distract them in another part of the building. Before they could catch their breath, two swivel chairs decorated with large orange and yellow bows and two enormous orange boxes were carried in. Thelma Melendez, Department of Education assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education, gave credit to OfficeMax for recognizing the sacrifice that teachers make. After brief comments by Office Max executives Sam Duncan, CEO, Sam Martin, COO, Bill Bonner, director of external relations, and Carolyn



*Teacher's Day participants*

Brooks, chief diversity officer, it was time to dig in. The children cheered as each item, large and small, was revealed from the big orange boxes.

The new supplies' impact will be felt throughout the school. The math enrichment program reaches every classroom and will be a major emphasis in school curriculum this year.



# An Open Letter to JHS Reunion Attendees

I would like to personally thank all who came out to the first annual Jefferson High School Alumni Reunion on October 3 at the newly-renovated Capital Skyline Inn Hotel here in Southwest. Attending were Jefferson graduates dating

back to as far as 1964, evident by the many black and white photographs passed around conjuring up old memories. Alumni from the 70s, 80s and 90s also represented their respective classes, many who came with their spouses and children – some of whom were JHS graduates themselves!

It was a moving event just seeing childhood friends chat and catch up. Many of those who attended Jefferson in the 70s were talking about the recent loss of former principal Mr. Campbell and assistant principal Mr. Miller. These two men impacted countless lives. They will be greatly missed.

Again, thank you all for coming out and supporting the JHS reunion. I can honestly say I enjoyed every minute I spent thinking about and planning this event. It gives me great pleasure in knowing that you had a BLAST just seeing classmates and childhood friends from your PAST.

Sincerely yours,  
Paul Taylor



Jefferson alumni Karinne Kennedy, Loretta Morgan-Henry, Tiffany Boyd, Latourea Taylor and Trina Boyd enjoy the reunion



*It looks like another surface parking lot for Southwest. The former site of Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell on South Capitol Street near the 7-11 is being cleared and getting a coat of asphalt. Ruben Companies holds the property, along with the former gas station property next door. It is likely that both parcels will serve as parking until any construction projects are approved and financed.*

## ANC 6D

From p. 2

the Anacostia River. A current Zoning Commission order requires that the developer apply for its first building permit by next spring. A divided ANC voted to support Florida Rock Properties' application for a deadline extension until spring 2012.

Steve Tanner owns the Old Friendship Baptist Church at the corner of Delaware Avenue and H Street. He too has applied to postpone

the deadline for redeveloping his property, but unlike Florida Rock Properties, Tanner has not appeared before ANC 6D regarding a postponement. ANC 6D chair Andy Litsky has asked the Zoning Commission to delay its ruling to give Tanner time to make an ANC presentation.

Finally, ANC 6D unanimously voted to urge the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to replace the broken pond pump in the park at Sixth and I streets before DPR refills the pond next spring.

## Liquor License

To address ongoing problems with Safeway – our neighborhood's largest retailer and only supermarket – our ANC formed the Southwest Safeway Task Force in 2007. The Task Force has met regularly with Safeway staff and orchestrated this September's Safeway Town Meeting. Anticipating its move next spring to a larger space, Safeway has applied for a license to sell beer and wine. The ANC's Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Committee has worked with the supermarket on an agreement to protect the neighborhood from problems that can arise from alcohol sales. But the ABC Committee hasn't shared its work with members of the Safeway Task Force. With one dissent, the ANC voted to recommend that the Safeway Task Force outline in writing its concerns regarding the draft agreement before its members get to see it.

## Public-Space Permit

Each year over 78,000 American women get diagnosed with cervical, endometrial or ovarian cancer. On Sunday, November 8, from 7 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., the Gynecological Cancer Foundation (GCF) will hold its first-ever Race to End Women's Cancer. The race will require the temporary closing (until 10 a.m.) of several ANC 6D streets north of E Street SW – none in the neighborhood's residential area. After GCF promised to promote the race in the Southwester, provide notices for ANC distribution and report to the ANC about the race's effect on bus routes, the ANC voted unanimously to support GCF's application to close streets during the race.

## Next Meeting

ANC 6D will next meet starting 7 p.m. Monday, November 9, in the sanctuary of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW.

## + Spiritual Calendar +

### Neighborhood Religious Services

#### Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle of the Assemblies of God

60 I St. SW  
Sunday: 10:45 a.m.; Friday: Prayer and Bible Study: 8 p.m.

#### St. Augustine's Episcopal Church

600 M St. SW  
Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
Tuesday 6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer  
Thursday, November 26, 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist service

#### St. Dominic Catholic Church

603 E St. SW  
Saturday: 5:15 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m., 10:45 a.m., 12:15 p.m. (Spanish), and 5:15 p.m.  
Weekdays: 8 a.m. and 12:10 p.m.

#### St. Matthew's Baptist Church

1105 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Call 488 7298 for service times.

#### St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Worshipping at First Trinity Lutheran Church, 501 Fourth St. NW at Judiciary Square  
Sunday: 10:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, 6:45 p.m. Sing & Rejoice  
Thursday, November 26 at 10:30 a.m.

#### St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

14 M St. SE  
Sunday: 8 a.m.  
Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.: 12:10 p.m.

#### Second Baptist Church

1200 Canal St. SW  
Sunday: 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.  
Wednesday: Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.  
Thursday, November 26, 11 a.m. service. Members of Rehoboth Baptist, located in Southeast, will join us.

#### Riverside Baptist

7<sup>th</sup> St. and Maine Avenue, SW  
Sunday: 10 a.m. with Bible Study at 9 a.m.

#### Westminster Presbyterian Church


400 I St. SW  
Sunday: 11 a.m.

#### Galilee A.M.E. Church

Worshipping at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 600 M St. SW  
Sunday: 2 p.m. Wednesday: Bible Study 7:30 p.m.

#### Christ United Methodist Church

900 4th St. SW  
Sunday: 10:00 a.m.

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## Commander

From p. 1

Command and General Staff College in May 2000, Coffman served three years in the 11th Aviation Regiment, Illesheim, Germany. His initial assignment was as operations officer, 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry, followed by becoming the 11th Aviation Regiment's operations officer and returning to the 2nd Squadron as executive officer. While assigned to the Squadron, he deployed as the Task Force 2-6 Cavalry executive officer in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. From 2003 to 2005, Coffman was assigned to

the 1-291st Training Support Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas, mobilizing and training Reserve Component Aviation units for deployment in support of KFOR, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. In 2005, he assumed command of the U.S. Army Garrison, Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Ga., supporting soldiers and army families through two deployments and the installation designation as an Army Community of Excellence. Prior to assuming command of Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Coffman served as the military assistant and executive officer for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (installations and environment).

Coffman holds a master's degree in Administration from Central Michigan University and a bachelor's of science degree from Texas A&M University. His military education includes aviation officers' basic and advanced courses and the command and general staff officers' course. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals, and Senior Army Aviator Badge.

Coffman has been married for 24 years and raised four sons on military installations overseas and throughout the United States.

## Southwest Scholarship Fund Recipient Shows Gratitude

By Jamal Hansberry

To whom much is given, much is required. In this powerful quote lies an even more powerful theme; that being, those who are given great opportunity are tasked with the responsibility of doing great things.

However, too often are individuals with considerable potential overlooked and denied opportunities. If not for those in positions to

grant opportunities to others, many of our world's greatest goals may have never been accomplished.

In this spirit, the Southwest community hosts a scholarship which provides exceptional students, possessing vehement potential, with some of the resources required to acquire a college education. I am grateful to be a recipient of the Southwest Community Scholarship Fund, which aids my family to finance my tuition.

The SCSF allots me the opportunity to attend Morehouse College, an institution that breeds some of the most influential African-American men the world has ever known, and I could not be more proud.

It thrills me to benefit from an organization that believes in the power of knowledge and the cultivation of a community, for the SCSF uplifted me in a way that will allow me to help advance others in the future.

## Holiday Focus

From p. 7

you want a healthier option, try the Help the Homeless Walk on November 21 at the National Mall or the Trot for Hunger on Thanksgiving Day. Both of these options are moderate walking courses which can give your exercise plan a boost all while helping those less fortunate.

Keep time for walking in your schedule, as a preparation for a major event like the two mentioned, and afterwards as a way to keep fit and reduce the excess pounds during the holidays. Southwest and Capitol Riverfront are walk-able neighborhoods which provide excellent venues

to enjoy time with loved ones while also improving your health.

Here is a good way to enjoy a holiday favorite with less guilt.

### Crustless Pumpkin Pie

Spray a 9 inch glass pie plate with cooking spray, line with a parchment paper and spray the parchment paper also. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

15 ounce can of pure pumpkin  
12 ounce can of fat free evaporated milk  
3/4 cup of egg substitute  
one tablespoon pumpkin spice

2/3 cup of Splenda sugar substitute  
one teaspoon vanilla extract

Blend all ingredients until smooth and well mixed.

Pour into prepared pie plate. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 300 degrees and bake for 35 minutes more or until custard is set and a knife comes out clean when inserted in the center. Allow to cool and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

If you are looking for a protein boost, blend in 2 or 3 scoops of vanilla protein powder to the mix before pouring into the pie plate.

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Prayer vigil  
participants

## Forensic

From p. 1

ropolitan Police Headquarters sought to pray for action on the part of District politicians.

Clergymen, community activists and concerned citizens were present. Representatives from the mayor's office or city council were not. But in less than 72 hours, the city allowed for the project to resume once again.

The Consolidated Forensics Lab will be the first of its kind in the District. Currently D.C. police rely on the FBI lab in Quantico to process DNA cases, lacking the space and equipment to do so on their own.

Official websites reveal that there are more

than 600 unsolved murder cases in the District dating as far back as 1962, a number which Mothers of Unsolved Murders would put much higher – 4,000, according to a flier for the vigil. Additionally, authorities only close about 50-60 percent of all rape cases recorded annually in the city.

Valencia Mohammed, a community activist from Southeast, founded Mothers of Unsolved Murders after losing two sons to gun violence. It is her intention to bring grieving parents together to put pressure on local police and governing bodies to alleviate violent crime and make the District a safe place for its youth.

This time, to the benefit of all D.C. residents, it may have worked.

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